

Naval Legal Service Command Adapts to Best Serve Navy, Clients

From JAG Corps Public Affairs

In October, the Judge Advocate General's Corps reorganized the Naval Legal Service Command (NLSC) to meet the Navy's evolving demands for expeditionary legal services support while continuing to provide quality military justice services.

"The demand for Navy JAG Corps' services is greater than ever, but the nature of our practice has changed significantly over the past several years," said Vice Adm. Nanette DeRenzi, the Judge Advocate General of the Navy. "The Department of the Navy and joint forces operate in an increasingly complex legal and policy environment and expect more from our community than ever before."

To prepare the JAG Corps to meet the challenges that lie ahead, Naval Legal Service Offices (NLSOs) were replaced with Defense Service Offices (DSOs). There were eight

NLSOs headquartered in Pensacola, Norfolk, Bremerton, Jacksonville, San Diego, Washington, D.C., Naples, Italy, and Yokosuka, Japan. These eight NLSOs realigned to become four DSOs, and are headquartered in San Diego, Washington, D.C., Norfolk, and Yokosuka. The DSOs' mission is to defend service members in military justice proceedings, represent them at administrative boards, and provide other representational services, including advice on non-judicial punishment and adverse personnel actions.

NLSOs also transferred the mission of providing legal assistance services to the nine Region Legal Service Offices (RLSOs). Legal assistance services include wills and powers of attorney, and matters involving consumer, family, landlord-tenant, and predatory lending law.

"Sailors and their families will continue to receive legal assistance, but those services will now be

provided by the RLSOs," said Rear Adm. James Crawford, Commander, Naval Legal Service Command. "On most bases, the locations where legal assistance services are provided remain the same."

The realignment changed the way Sailors receive defense services in 12 locations around the fleet. These 12 locations are Everett, Whidbey Island, Port Hueneme, Lemoore, Corpus Christi, New Orleans, Millington, Kings Bay, Guantanamo Bay, Newport, Earle, and Sigonella. Similar to the way Sailors receive personal defense services when they are at sea, Sailors requesting defense services such as representation for courts-martial or administrative boards will make initial contact with an attorney by telephone or other remote communication technology, with subsequent in-person consultation arranged, if necessary.

Navy commands retained their current staff judge advocate support. RLSOs will continue to provide court-martial prosecution and command legal advice to Navy region and installation commanders, and tenant commands such as ships and squadrons.

As part of the realignment, the JAG Corps will refocus on the first two years of all new judge advocates' careers by beginning a comprehensive training program in prosecuting and defending cases, providing legal assistance, and advising Navy commands.

"This realignment will improve the JAG Corps' training for new accession judge advocates by more thoroughly preparing them to meet the Navy's legal needs," said DeRenzi.

For a complete list of services and contact information of the closest legal office, visit www.jag.navy.mil. 🌐



Defense Service Office West provides legal advice and representation to eligible service members at courts-martial and administrative proceedings, including enlisted administrative separation boards and officer boards of inquiry, in addition to providing advice to service members on defense-related topics such as nonjudicial punishment.